16 February 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR : Director of Security

SUBJECT : Comments on Manuscript Give Us This Day: CIA and the Bay of Pigs Invasion by Edward J. Hamilton

1. This manuscript has evidently been kicking around in publishing circles since at least mid-1968, presumably without CIA clearance. William Buckley of the National Review seems to have been "shopping" it at one point. One publisher rejected it as too "controversial", and noted its "confidential" nature as well as its potential for libel suits.

2. In the foreword to this manuscript, the author (whom I shall refer to under his assumed name of Hamilton), describes the book as a "personal account" of CIA's role in the Bay of Pigs affair in which he was a senior CIA participant for 19 months. He notes in the foreword his hope that someone would have written this book so that he would not have to do it; now convinced that, if he does not write it, it will never be written, he has taken up his pen "reluctantly and in a mood of nostalgic bitterness." Hamilton states that he has used no official files or documents and has consulted no one in preparing this work. Where true names are used in the manuscript for CIA personnel, he writes that they have been publicly identified before, and in this contention I believe that he is correct, with the possible exception of Jim Noel. The author's claim that this book would provide no information not known to Castro's intelligence service, or that details this late are of no value to the opposition, is, in my view, seriously open to question.

3. The book is, in general, favorable to CIA actions in the Bay of Pigs. The villains of the piece are certain liberal figures in the Kennedy Administration (Schlesinger, Goodwin, Stevenson) and to some extent, the President himself. In his concluding chapter, the author's bitterness is undisguised against those in the Administration and the press who took the opportunity of the Bay of Pigs incident to attack and denigrate CIA.

4. Messrs. Bissell and Barnes and the author's other CIA co-workers in the Cuban Project, by and large, are given quite favorable treatment. One exception is General Cabell, whom the author excoriates, and it is apparent that Hamilton's opinion of Jerry Droller is far from

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favorable, both on political and professional grounds. 03 [Jim Noel] also comes out poorly.

5. It is apparent that Hamilton feels very deeply about the Bay of Pigs and its aftermath, to the extent that he is willing to put his career on the line by circulating this manuscript to several publishers without apparent clearance or authorization. He has utilized as his nom de plume the special name assigned to him in the project for dealing with the Cuban Frente, and it would not take anyone who was involved in the Cuban Project more than a few pages of reading to identify the author, as one potential publisher pointed out. The manuscript itself is the most comprehensive story of a CIA operation that has ever been written for publication to my knowledge. Meetings, conversations, and internal and external CIA actions are here reported extensively and with all the authority of an "insider" who was there. It far exceeds in detail anything that has been written on the Bay of Pigs, including Charles Murphy's article in Fortune of September 1961 or the "insider" books that were published following the death of President Kennedy.

6. Attached herewith is a chapter-by-chapter description of the manuscript particularly as it affects CIA security. This analysis states what the author states, whether right or wrong. Where I have occasionally added comments of my own, they are in brackets [].

Walter Pforzheimer
Curator
Historical Intelligence Collection

Attachment
As noted above

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Chapter I

1. The chapter opens in 1956 in Ambassador Gardner's office in Havana, where a courtesy call was being paid on the Ambassador by the CIA Central American and Caribbean Chiefs of Station who are holding their annual regional meeting. It is noted that one of the reasons for selecting the place of meeting was the "absence of Communist embassies" (p. 6). The presence of Col. J. C. King, Division Chief, is mentioned. Col. King remarks that Castro was "heavily involved" in the Bogotazo, setting the stage for Hamilton's subsequent comment. [Actually Castro played a junior role in the Bogotazo, and it was after the Bay of Pigs that Mr. Dulles assigned Hamilton the task of determining Castro's role in the Bogotazo.] (p. 7). Hamilton states that in the subsequent three years, while funds were being collected in South America for Castro's 26th of July Movement, there were no orders from CIA Headquarters to penetrate pro-Castro groups abroad (p. 10). He then states that in March 1960 he was "having coffee with the newly-elected president of the country to which I was assigned." (p.10) [This could reveal the author's relationship with President Nardone of Uruguay who became President in early March 1960.]

2. Mr. Richard Bissell and Mr. Tracy Barnes are mentioned and the author adds that he had worked with Barnes as a member of the team that ousted President Arbenz from Guatemala (p. 11). At this point Hamilton is recalled to Headquarters to become Chief of Political Action in an Eisenhower-approved project to assist Cuban exiles in overthrowing Castro. His duties would include organizing Cuban leaders into a government-in-exile which would form a provisional government in Cuba when Castro was forced out. Hamilton's base was to be in Costa Rica, provided ex-President Pepe Figueres could obtain Costa Rican agreement (p. 11). [This link could be quite embarrassing in view of Figueres' recent re-election as President of Costa Rica.]

3. At this point the manuscript introduces the Project Chief as Jake [presumably Mr. Esterline], who is referred to as Jake throughout (p. 12). We also meet Droller about whom there is some "diversity in attitudes" among CIA officers. Droller's operational name of Frank Bender is noted (p. 13), and he is referred to as Bender throughout the rest of the manuscript. [This is not the first time Droller has been identified as Bender; his name was blown by Arthur Schlesinger in his book A Thousand Days in 1965.] Bender's cover telephone arrangements in Miami and New York, which allowed him to answer local calls there at his Washington desk, are disclosed (p. 14). Hamilton states that Bender told him that as far as he knew "Richard Helms, Chief of Operations for the Clandestine Services, had not been cut in" (p. 14).

4. Hamilton calls on the Project's Propaganda Chief [presumably Dave Phillips], whom he calls Knight throughout, noting that Knight had worked for him on the Guatemala project. He notes that Knight "had spent most of his CIA career on the outside, i.e., under cover", and that he had spent the three preceding years under cover in Havana. At this point Knight was also establishing a clandestine radio on Swan Island (p. 15). The Paramilitary Chief is also introduced and is called Ned throughout. (p. 15). Ned tells Hamilton that Cuban refugees are being recruited and polygraphed at Useppa Island off Fort Myer, Florida (p. 16). Hamilton is also advised of the role of Roberto Alejos and of the Retalulehu base in Guatemala; that all this had the consent of Guatemalan President Ydigoras. [This has all been previously published.] (p. 16). Hamilton lists certain Cuban leaders, most of whom were helped by CIA to escape from Cuba. This Hamilton considered ironic, because the Chief of Station, Havana, [Jim Noel], and his deputy, [Earl Williamson,] "had been enthusiastic over Castro while he was in the Sierra Maestra, and had treated with certain rebel groups . . ." (p. 17). Hamilton also charges that Assistant Secretary of State Rubottom and William Wieland "exercised considerable influence" over Col. J. C. King (p. 18).

5. Hamilton returned to his station, closed out his affairs and then came back to Washington. Resigning from [the Foreign Service,] "my cover at the time", he then flew to Spain to try to defect the Cuban military attache there (p. 20).

Chapter II

1. In this chapter Hamilton states that Barnes and others recommended that he visit Havana, and that the CIA Cover Staff provided him with the documentation for his operational alias of Edward J. Hamilton which he kept for the duration of the Project (p. 23). Upon returning from Havana, Hamilton prepared a report and recommendations. The first recommendation was that Castro be assassinated before or coincident with the invasion. Hamilton considered this his principal recommendation, but Barnes would only tell him subsequently that it was in the hands of a "special group." So far as Hamilton was able to determine, no plan was ever developed within CIA to assassinate Castro (pp. 30-31). [These comments would be unfortunate if published, in view of current charges in the press of various CIA "assassinations".]

2. Hamilton describes a luncheon that he and Jake had with Brig. General Robert Cushman, then Assistant for National Security Affairs to Vice President Nixon. Hamilton had known Cushman when the latter had had an earlier tour in CIA, and Jake said that Cushman followed the Cuban Project for the Vice President. Hamilton states that Cushman advised him that Nixon "as Chairman [sic] of the National Security Council, was the real spark plug behind the project" and the Administration's focal point and troubleshooter regarding it. The General gave Hamilton his private telephone number in the event that he had something for the Vice President's urgent attention (pp. 31A-32).

Chapter III (commencing at page 34)

1. As in Chapter II, here again Hamilton's distaste for Bender comes through. The difference is particularly one of their political philosophies -- Hamilton being quite conservative and Bender being a liberal, i.e., Hamilton was pro-Nixon, Bender apparently anti-Nixon. Hamilton gets the impression (in both Chapters II and III) that conservative Cuban elements, such as the business and professional communities, would not be much utilized in the Project's plans. In Hamilton's view, the emphasis was on utilizing Cubans who had originally supported Castro but who had fled Cuba when they became aware of the direction in which the Castro Revolution was moving.

2. In this chapter, Hamilton discusses the main leaders of the Frente with whom he was to work, and their budget (pp. 35-39).

3. Hamilton tells of visiting the Cuban Project headquarters in Coral Gables, noting the building's disguise as an electronics firm for cover purposes (p. 39), as well as CIA subsidies to Cuban exile groups and newspapers. In an intra-office squabble with the paramilitary elements of the Project, Hamilton loses control of military hardware, a decision he considers basically wrong in that it placed the paramilitary people in charge of what the Cubans wanted most and thus undercut Hamilton's political action role (pp. 42-45). The bulk of the chapter describes the various members of the Frente including their idiosyncrasies, as well as some account of those who would not join.

Chapter III (commencing at page 45. This is a second Chapter III and apparently was misnumbered.)

1. The attempt to locate the Frente in Costa Rica having failed, it was determined to set them up in Mexico City, to which Hamilton and his family now repaired. Hamilton's office was to be independent [of the Station] and his cover was to be that of a fiction writer. Hamilton's use of an American businessman in Mexico named Sam as his principal manager of Frente activities, safehouses and the like are described. Here the name of Manolo Ray is first introduced (pp. 50-52). 1b

2. Harassment by the Mexican police and other authorities, including some attempted surveillance, caused Hamilton to recommend withdrawal from Mexico. This caused some problem because President Eisenhower wanted the Project to appear as Cuban as possible, which presented difficulties on American soil. However, things proved so difficult in Mexico that the Frente was moved back to Miami in October 1960. This caused some personal difficulty to Hamilton because it was impossible to explain to his young children why he should be living under an assumed name in Miami. As a result, his wife and children were forced to come back to Washington, while Hamilton stayed in Miami.

Chapter IV

1. Mention is made of the training of an exile parachute battalion in Guatemala. The training was being handled by Colonel Lake [presumably Lou Rucker], "one of the world's most experienced parachutists" (p. 57). Mention is also made of Hamilton's assistant, Bernie, who had originally joined the Havana police force at CIA request, which ultimately lost him his U. S. citizenship (p. 59). CIA funding of the Frente through foreign banks is noted (p. 60). Some problems with Bender including a security breach, which came to the attention of the FBI, are mentioned (p. 61). Another security flap is noted (pp. 63-64), when it was discovered that Hamilton's assistant in Mexico City had his briefcase stolen with compromising documents. Hamilton was required by Col. King to return to Washington to make a recorded statement on his relations with Sam and also possibly to submit to a polygraph. The resultant interview was such that Hamilton became "convinced of Col. King's ill-will, and never spoke to him after that" (p. 65). Hamilton states that a Marine Colonel named Haskins had been placed in charge of the Project's paramilitary operations, seconded from the Joint Chiefs of Staff. He garnered Hamilton's ill-will by refusing to accede to the Frente's request that they be permitted to visit the training site in Guatemala.

2. There is some mention of relations with the Coast Guard in Florida in alerting them to those boats which CIA desired to allow to go through to Cuba without being stopped. This chapter also includes the usual problems of squabbling within the Frente.

Chapter V

1. Hamilton writes in this chapter (p. 77), and in several subsequent chapters, of the general failure of infiltration efforts into Cuba, the roll-up of those that got there, and the poor record for delivering supplies to those anti-Castro guerrillas who might have gotten into Cuba. Maritime operations also were not very effective.

2. Hamilton underscores the fact that at no meeting of which he was aware was it asserted that the Cuban underground or population was scheduled to play a significant role in the invasion. He notes the many statements to the contrary that appeared in the press and elsewhere from uninformed commentators (p. 79). The remainder of the chapter describes Hamilton's views on various members of the Frente, his conversations with them during the period between the election of 1960 and President Kennedy's inauguration, during which time a lot of the activity ground to a halt. Hamilton here also again airs one of his major gripes, namely that the Cuban political objectives were being continually downgraded in favor of the paramilitary operations (pp. 92-93).

Chapter VI

1. In this chapter Hamilton levels some criticism at Ambassador Bonsal, whom he describes as ineffectual and whom he calls "fumbling Phil" (pp. 94-95)

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2. Hamilton describes Jim Noel's arrival at the Miami Base, following the severing of diplomatic relations with Cuba, as "unwelcome", because he felt him to be "basically either soft on Communism or at least terribly confused about the issues." (p. 96). Hamilton offers his criticism of Manuel (Manolo) Ray because the latter had stayed with Castro too long and was now sounding a theme of "the revolution betrayed" which was finding favor at the White House, State and CIA.

Chapter VII

1. This chapter relates Hamilton's touchy visit, with some members of the Frente, to the Guatemala training bases. Their breakfast conversations with President Ydigoras are described. This breakfast gives the author a chance to reflect back on the CIA role in the overthrow of Guatemalan President Arbenz. He recalls the three exiled leaders of Guatemala, his own support for Dr. Cordova to head the new government, and State's veto of Col. Ydigoras as "vaguely authoritarian." At a crucial moment, however, Dr. Cordova had to undergo cancer surgery and therefore could not be selected; the choice fell on Castillo Armas. Now Ydigoras was President but was subsequently overthrown because he had done so much for the U.S. and Cuba (pp. 119-122).

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2. Bob Davis, [the CIA Chief in Guatemala,] is mentioned as a participant in the breakfast with Ydigoras. [Davis' name has been published previously.]

3. At the Guatemalan training site, Hamilton refers to being greeted there by an American Army Lt. Colonel whose name was "Frank." In a footnote, Hamilton adds that this officer had been detailed to CIA for the Project, and that "Credible allegations of his actions during the invasion strongly suggest that he was to some extent mentally unbalanced" (p. 124). Hostile conversations between Hamilton and "Frank", as well as the initial unfortunate polemics of Frente chief Tony Varona, are described.

4. The presence of Green Berets to help in the training of the Brigade is noted. Colonel Lake's presence and parachute training is again mentioned (pp. 135-136).

Chapter VIII

1. This chapter describes more conversations regarding internal problems within the Frente, one of whose members is trying to bring in Manolo Ray (p. 140-145).

2. Hamilton then tells of a meeting with Bissell who said that he was under White House pressure to broaden the political base of the Frente. Evidently former Venezuelan President Betancourt, former Costa Rican President Figueres and Puerto Rican Governor Muñoz Marin were insisting on the inclusion of Manolo Ray (p. 146). Schlesinger and Goodwin were also backing Ray. Hamilton mentioned that the Cubans did not like Ray because of the lateness with which he broke from Cas tro (p. 147). Bissell noted that the Joint Chiefs of Staff wished to send an evaluation team to the training camps to appraise the state of readiness (p. 148).

3. Tracy Barnes takes Hamilton to see Schlesinger at the White House where the latter is working on his famous White Paper on Cuba (p. 151). It was there that Hamilton learned that Secretary of State Rusk had veto'd the original point of invasion as too "noisy." Ambassador Stevenson joins the meeting and asks Barnes if everything was going well. Hamilton interprets this remark as indicating that the Ambassador knew about the invasion plans, which the latter had subsequently denied. Hamilton also mentions the fact that Barnes had kept a memorandum of his briefing of Stevenson before the invasion (pp. 152-153).

Chapter IX

1. Hamilton states that the Joint Chiefs of Staff assessment team visited the Guatemalan camps and issued an enthusiastic appraisal as to the Brigade's training and battle readiness (p. 160). The author notes that this was important in the light of post-invasion attempts by the Pentagon to play down their role.

2. In a footnote, Hamilton writes that after the invasion Bender "was galled" by the fact that the exiles referred to him freely, and usually in unflattering terms (p. 162). Hamilton also adds that he learned that [Jim Noel] and [Will Carr,] "Col. King's crony", were becoming increasingly active among non-Frente Cubans in Washington and New York (p. 163). [This presumably cut across Hamilton's political action lines.]

3. The remainder of the chapter is largely taken up with discussions of intra-Frente problems, with a note of the fact that American infiltration operations into Cuba had virtually ceased because of their lack of success.

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Chapter X

1. This chapter opens with an unsuccessful internal revolt against President Ydigoras in Guatemala and indicates the desire of the Cuban Frente and some of the Cuban Brigade in Guatemala to come to his assistance. Hamilton relayed this request to Washington, where it was considered by Bender, Barnes and Bissell, and presumably higher levels, and turned down (p. 180). Ydigoras succeeded in putting down this revolt. Hamilton notes that he subsequently learned that several companies of the Brigade had disobeyed orders, made a show of force at a rebel stronghold and helped stifle the uprising (p. 182).

2. In mid-March 1961, Hamilton was summoned back to Washington to a meeting with Bissell, Barnes, Jake, Bender and James Noel. Barnes pointed out that the White House wanted a broader base in the Frente, and how important it was to the White House to bring Manolo Ray into the picture. Hamilton pointed out that the Cubans disliked Ray and that a large percentage of the Cubans accepted the Frente. Noel indicated that Ray was not as bad as painted, while Hamilton listed the Cuban objections to Ray's program of Castroism without Fidel and the length of time it took Ray to become disillusioned with Castro. Furthermore, Ray's program did not include returning to the Cuban Constitution of 1940 which the others all supported (pp. 185-189). As a result of the desire to force Ray into the Frente, Hamilton resigned his position in Miami and was reassigned (p. 189). Jim Noel and Carr replaced him (p. 190).

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Chapter XI

1. Hamilton moved to Washington to assist Knight [presumably Dave Phillips] in the propaganda work. An attempt to secure Mexican cooperation to obtain a re-fueling stop for the Guatemalan-based aircraft scheduled to bomb Cuba failed because of the venality of a Mexican air force officer whose price CIA would not meet. In Hamilton's view, this was an error.

2. As the Frente leaders were clamoring for invasion information, it was determined to bring them to New York and to tell them if they wanted to learn the assault plans and go to the beachhead, they would have to agree to remain in isolation from that date forward. Hamilton stresses the "voluntary" basis for this agreement, to counter later charges that CIA had kidnapped the Frente and imprisoned them by force (p. 200).

3. With regard to the selection of the Bay of Pigs landing site, Hamilton states that assault plans were almost entirely in the hands of the Pentagon (p. 203). Relations with Lem Jones' public relations firm in New York are noted (p. 204).

4. A CIA project officer is flown to the Carrier Boxer, flagship of a naval task force that was assembled in Puerto Rican waters. This officer was to serve as liaison between the naval task force commander, CIA Headquarters and the Cuban Brigade (p. 205).

Chapter XII

1. This chapter tells of the initial air raid on Cuba. Ambassador Stevenson's doubt at the UN as to the origins of the planes are surfaced, and Barnes and Hamilton draft a message to Stevenson. When Stevenson received it and was advised of the true nature of the planes, Hamilton heard that Stevenson had called the White House to express his resentment (p. 211).

2. U-2 photography showed that the initial air raid on Cuba had not been as successful as claimed, and a second strike was being prepared when General Cabell entered the Headquarters War Room (p. 214). Cabell stated that he thought only one air strike had been authorized, but the Project Officers gave as their opinion that there had been no limitation other than to knock out the Cuban air force. General Cabell sent for Bissell and stated that the matter would have to be checked out with Secretary Rusk. In the meantime, the second strike was held up (p. 215). Cabell and Bissell went to meet Rusk at State. Adverse comments in the War Room about General Cabell are quoted (p. 216).

Chapter XIII (commencing at p. 218)

1. The tenor of remarks in this chapter and in the conclusion of the previous chapter is that the meeting with Rusk included the President, Rostow, and Stevenson. [Other authoritative accounts have included only Rusk, Cabell and Bissell; Tracy Barnes has said he also was present. It is believed that the President was not at the meeting but was contacted by Rusk on the telephone at his Virginia home. There is no other indication, other than Hamilton's allegation, that Walt Rostow was present]. (p. 219)

2. Hamilton's and other anti-Cabell views are expressed, with an indication that the call-off of the second air strike would not have happened had Dulles been in Washington (pp. 222-223).

Chapter XIII (commencing at page 225. This chapter is apparently misnumbered.)

1. This chapter describes some of the battle problems at the beachhead. Three jets from the Boxer were allowed a reconnaissance run over the beach (p. 227). Finally the President authorized an hour's air cover from the Boxer, but the time was fouled up and the Brigade's B-26's were shot down before the air cover arrived (p. 230).

Chapter XIV

1. In this chapter, Hamilton is highly critical of the post-invasion attacks on CIA by Administration officials and the press. Hamilton notes the President's establishment of the Taylor Committee to look into the causes of the failure and states his conclusion that the Committee was to "whitewash the New Frontier by heaping guilt on CIA" (p. 234).

2. The only exception to these attacks was Charles Murphy's favorable article in the September 1961 Fortune. Hamilton believes the article to have been authored by a high Administration official who had for months defended the invasion and urged the President to commit air strikes. Hamilton does not reveal the source's name (p. 238). [Presumably Admiral Burke]. Hamilton charges that one subsequent CIA Chief of Cuban Operations was removed because of incompatibility with Robert Kennedy (p. 242).